

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A license management apparatus on a customer side, which makes a license agreement of software and/or a use apparatus that installs the software, comprising:

report information storage means for storing report information that pertains to the license agreement;

elapsed time measurement means for detecting an elapse of a predetermined term, and outputting detection information; and

report information output means for automatically sending the report information as use information to a predetermined destination in response to the detection information input from the elapsed time measurement means.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the report information that pertains to the license agreement is apparatus use information indicating that the use apparatus is in use.

3. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the report information that pertains to the license agreement is software use information indicating that the use apparatus has installed the software.

4. An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the software use information contains version information of the software.

0915701.072601

5. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the use apparatus is a personal computer.

6. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the use apparatus is a vehicle such as a passenger vehicle, motorbike, auto truck, and the like, and said report information output means includes a radio device.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the use apparatus is a home electric appliance such as a television receiver, refrigerator, or the like.

8. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said report information output means includes transmission/reception means connected to one of a radio line, telephone line, Internet, and intranet.

9. An apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a license alert processing device connected to said transmission/reception means.

10. An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said license alert processing device generates alert display information upon receiving an alert command via said transmission/reception means.

11. A license management apparatus comprising:
report information storage means for storing report information that pertains to a license agreement from a plurality of use apparatuses under management;

elapsed time measurement means for detecting

09045701.02501

an elapse of a predetermined term, and outputting detection information; and

report information output means for automatically sending the report information as use information to a predetermined destination in response to the detection information input from the elapsed time measurement means.

12. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said report information storage means is connected to the plurality of use apparatuses under the management via communication means, and stores report information that pertains to the license agreement of each use apparatus.

13. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said report information output means sends the number of the plurality of use apparatuses under the management as the use information when said report information output means outputs the report information as the use information.

14. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said report information output means sends the number of copies of software installed in the plurality of use apparatuses under the management as the use information when said report information output means outputs the report information as the use information.

15. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the use apparatus is a personal computer.

16. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the use apparatus is a vehicle such as a passenger vehicle, motorbike, auto truck, and the like, and said report information output means includes a radio device.

17. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the use apparatus is a home electric appliance such as a television receiver, refrigerator, or the like.

18. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said information storage means, elapsed time measurement means, and report information output means are equipped in a relay server.

19. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said report information output means includes transmission/reception means connected to one of a radio line, telephone line, Internet, and intranet.

20. An apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising a license alert device connected to said transmission/reception means.

21. An apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said license alert processing device generates alert display information and sends the information to the plurality of use apparatuses under management upon receiving an alert command via said transmission/reception means.

22. A license management apparatus comprising:
report information storage means for receiving

0945701-02204

report information that pertains to a license from
a customer, which is sent via communication means;

check means for comparing the report information
from the customer with corresponding registered
5 information, and checking if the comparison result
satisfies a predetermined condition; and

transmission means for, when the check result of
said check means does not satisfy the predetermined
condition, outputting alert information and sending
10 the alert information to a terminal of the customer,
and for, when the check result satisfies the
predetermined condition, sensing key information that
allows the terminal to continue operation.

23. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein
15 the key information contains a plurality of pieces of
key information.

24. A license management method wherein a user
apparatus which is granted use permission, or a user
apparatus that uses software which is granted use
20 permission comprises means for storing condition
information used to update the use permission, and
sends the condition information used to update the use
permission to a management apparatus that granted the
use permission, and

25 the management apparatus that granted the use
permission checks contents of the condition
information used to update the use permission, and

sends key information to the use apparatus only when
the contents satisfy an update condition.

09915701.072601